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Public Hearing
Planning and Development Committee
Testimony Opposing H.B. 5176
An Act Concerning Community Residences
February 19, 2016

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Miller and members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Melissa Marshall. I live in West Hartford and I'm here today in my capacity as Coordinator of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance, a coalition representing people from all disability groups. I'm here today to urge you to oppose **H.B. 5176 An Act Concerning Community Residences**.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal and state law, state and local government entities are prohibited from directing where group homes serving people disabilities can operate, limiting the number of homes that can be located in a particular area or requiring providers to notify town officials for neighbors before opening a home. They also require that reasonable modifications be made to zoning and other laws when necessary to provide equal opportunity in housing for people disabilities.

This bill clearly represents an opportunity to limit the housing options for individuals with disabilities who live in group homes.

Connecticut has had a history of attempting to exclude people disabilities who live in group homes from communities. This includes but is not limited to; ordinances that limit the number of people that live in a home, defining family by number of occupants in a home rather than people per square foot of a home in limiting the location of group homes through spacing and density restrictions.



It is absolutely critical that the state not pass a bill that contains restrictive language like this, particularly given this history of attempting to limit and exclude people live in a group homes from communities.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this matter.

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